

Remarks at the Opening Session of the NATO-Russia Council Meeting in Rome

May 28, 2002

Secretary General, thank you for your leadership. Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for your grand hospitality. You've been a great host. And I want to welcome our friend President Vladimir Putin to this table, and all my NATO colleagues.

Today marks an historic achievement for a great alliance and a great European nation. Two former foes are now joined as partners, overcoming 50 years of division and a decade of uncertainty. And this partnership takes us closer to an even larger goal, a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace for the first time in history.

NATO was born over a half a century ago as an alliance committed to defending democracy and advancing freedom. Today we renew our commitment to these important goals. And as we reach out to a new Russia that is building freedom in its own land and is already joining us in defending freedom against a common enemy, we do so in the spirit of peace and friendship.

The attacks of September the 11th made clear that the new dangers of our age threaten all nations, including Russia. The months since have made clear that by working together against these threats, we multiply our effectiveness.

The NATO-Russia Council gives us the opportunity to move forward together on common challenges and to begin building ties that can be expanded far into the future. We will start with areas where our ability to help one another as equal partners is unmistakable, areas such as countering terrorism, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction, emergency planning, and search and rescue operations at sea.

We will improve our coordination in places where we are already working together, such as the Balkans. NATO, Russia, and our other partners can take great pride in the greater peace and stability we have brought to that region.

We will also look ahead to other areas where we can expand our cooperation, such

as missile defense and airspace control that can strengthen the security of all of Europe.

Nothing we do will subtract from NATO's core mission. We will be practical, moving forward step by step. And as our trust and track record of success grows, so will the breadth and depth of our work together.

The NATO-Russia Council offers Russia a path toward forming an alliance with the Alliance. It offers all our nations a way to strengthen our common security, and it offers the world a prospect of a more hopeful century.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:03 a.m. in the main conference room at Pratica di Mare Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Memorandum on Assistance to East Timor

May 27, 2002

Presidential Determination No. 2002-19

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on Eligibility of East Timor to Receive Defense Articles and Services Under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and the Arms Export Control Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the laws and Constitution of the United States, including section 503(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and section 3(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and services to East Timor will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are authorized and directed to report this finding to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 29.